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February 3d.

Vice-President BRIDGES in the Chair.

A letter was read from Rev. E. J. Lowe, dated Observatory, Beeston, near Nottingham, (England,) Jan. 7th, 1857, containing the following passage :—

"The late Mr. Lawson, F. R. S., left me his valuable collection of Meteorological Instruments, amongst which are Dr. Benjamin Franklin's Hygrometer, which is in as good working order as on the day it was made, an Electric Kite belonging to Dr. Franklin, and several letters. Mr. Lawson had a card placed on the hygrometer, with the following inscription, 'Invented by and belonged to Dr. Benjamin Franklin, the Patriot of Philadelphia.' I have mentioned this, thinking that you would feel an interest as American Philosophers in the information respecting the instruments of that glorious philosopher Dr. Franklin."

Communications were presented for publication in the Proceedings entitled :—

1. Descriptions of American land shells. By W. G. Binney.
2. Prodrômus descriptionis Animalium evertibratorum, quæ in expeditione ad Oceanum Pacificum Septentrionalem a Republica Federata missa, Joh. Rodgers duce, observ. et descripti W. Stimpson.
3. On the Crania of the Ancient Britons, with remarks on the people themselves. By Joseph Barnard Davis.

Which were severally referred to Committees.

Mr. Lea made the following remarks on the visual organs of certain species of the genus *Unio* :

He stated that he had at various times paid a good deal of attention to the habits and organs of the NAIADES of our own country, and for that purpose frequently had them for long periods in a living state under his observation. Their condition as to special sense has been of great interest, and particularly those of *touch*, *hearing* and *sight*. In the course of these investigations, it became evident to him that some species of *Unio* were *sensitive to light*, and he found one species (*Unio radiatus*) very eminently so. He stated that he was not aware of its ever having been suggested that any of the family were possessed of organs of sight, even in a young state, as in the case of the young of *Mytilus edulis*. It is well known that some of the Molluscs have large and perfect eyes, while some others have imperfect ones, but generally they are altogether devoid of the optic nerve. The *Strombidæ* are said to possess an eye highly organised, but in most of the *Gasteropoda* it is of a more simple structure, and perhaps only possesses sensibility of light without the power of distinct vision. The terrestrial *Gasteropoda* have usually a distinct eyeball on the extremity of the superior tentacula, which Dr. Leidy has shown, in some of our species of *Helices*, to possess a crystalline lens and choroidea, with clear, consistent, vitreous humor. Cuvier and Lamarck considered the whole class of *Conchifera* to be devoid of eyes, but Poli has shown that in *Pecten varius*, Lin., the margin of the mantle is furnished with numerous eyes. These, according to Carpenter, are protected by a sclerotic coat with a transparent cornea in front, a layer of pigment, a crystalline lens and vitreous body, and a retinal expansion proceeding from an optic nerve. In the course of his observations, Mr. Lea became satisfied that the closing of the siphonal tubes, on his approach to the specimens he had in his vivarium, was not altogether occasioned by the vibration caused by his approach, and he accordingly arranged numerous individuals of several species with a view carefully to observe them. In the course of these examinations repeatedly made, he found several species of *Unio* quite sensitive to his passing his hand between them and the light, while the *Margaritana margaritifera*, and 1857.]

Anodonta undulata and *A. lacustris*, Lea, showed no signs of sensitiveness. *Unio inflatus* exhibited but little motion, while numerous specimens of *U. radiatus* invariably gave more or less sign when the interruption of light took place. Some individuals were more sensitive than others, and the females exhibited this power much more than the males, often withdrawing, not only their siphons, but their mantle within the valves.

It is difficult to say with certainty how far their visual organs are developed, as well also as to number and exact position. The fringes of the branchial and anal siphons are, in the *Uniones*, formed of small, subconical tentacula. These are larger in the branchial siphon of *Unio*, while they do not exist at all in the anal opening of *Anodonta*. With a good lens the terminal point of the tentacula may be observed to be rounded and furnished with at least the appearance of an eye, and that it will prove to be a true eye, however imperfect, there can be but little doubt. Mr. Lea did not intend to pursue the minute anatomy of this organ; he left it to Dr. Leidy, who had done so much in the histology of the terrestrial Gasteropods, believing that he would be able to make out the complete anatomy of the eye in the *Unio*.

February 17th.

Vice-President LEA in the Chair.

Communications for publication in the Proceedings were read, entitled:—

1. Notice of a collection of Reptiles made by Dr. Henry A. Ford in the Gaboon country, West Africa, by Edward Hallowell, M. D.

2. Description of thirteen new species of UNIONES from Georgia, by Isaac Lea.

Which were referred as usual to Committees.

Dr. Leidy made the following observations on entozoa found in the Naiades.

He had observed a curious parasite allied to *Aspidogaster conchicola*, infesting *Anodonta fluviatilis* and *Anodonta lacustris*, within the cleft of the upper branchial cavity, adhering to the outer surface of the renal organ and the contiguous margin of the foot. The new parasite, for which the name of *Cotylaspis insignis* was proposed, is from $\frac{1}{2}$ a line to 1 line long, curved funnel shaped, with the base forming an oval ventral disk provided with an outer circle and an inner row of acetabula 29 in number. The animal is provided with distinct eyes, while *Aspidogaster*, in accordance with its being imprisoned in the pericardium of the Naiades, is blind.

February 24th.

Vice-President BRIDGES in the Chair.

The following communications, on report of the Committees to which they had been referred, were ordered to be published in the Proceedings.

Descriptions of American L and Shells.

BY W. G. BINNEY.

HELIX INTERCISA. Testa solidissima, luteo-cinerea, apice rufâ, globoso-conica; spira brevis, sutura impressa; anfr. quinque convexiusculi, lineis parallelis, volventibus, valde demissis, strias incrementales distinctas intercedentibus; anfractus [Feb.